

Ms. Deborah Streeter
Chair, Monterey Bay National
Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
c/o Monterey Bay National
Marine Sanctuary
299 Foam Street
Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Ms. Streeter:

Thank you once again for taking the time out of your busy schedule to attend the Annual Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting recently in California. Once again, the meeting was a success by all measures and I thank you for your contribution to that end. This letter is intended as a response to the meeting and in preparation for next year's meeting in Washington D.C. Please share this letter with your entire council.

This year was the fifth time the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) brought all of our Chairs together and the sixth time all the Coordinators have come together. The meetings have evolved from a focus in the early years on council "house-keeping" issues to more substantive topics in recent years. Over the past three years the NMSP has also experimented with the Council of Chairs providing input on national policy topics during a public advice session.

As always, I am dedicated to continued support of the councils, including this very productive annual meeting. As with all program activities, we strive to fine-tune the meeting on an annual basis in response to thoughts and ideas from staff and yourselves. Upon listening to the debate and discussions about the meeting over the past several years, the NMSP is responding in the following ways in planning for the 2006 Annual Meeting:

1. **Eliminate the advice session with the Council of Chairs.** In terms of the process of preparing for the advice session, it is extraordinarily difficult to plan far enough ahead to adequately accommodate each councils' meeting schedule. It is equally hard to create a process that adequately addresses the issue of the Chairs being able to represent the views of their councils in the real-time discussion format that occurs at the advice session. Most importantly, I recognize that many of you and your councils are not comfortable with the process of taking off your "site hat" and putting on a "national hat" since most of you feel that your expertise lies in your local community, sanctuary, resources and issues. In response to these numerous and on-going concerns, the NMSP will eliminate the Council of Chairs and the advice session in future years.
2. **Replace case studies with a panel discussion.** For the last several years, we have asked each Council to present a case study at the meeting. Your feedback to us has indicated that although you find the case studies valuable, you would also like to have additional time at the meetings for informal discussions and networking. In response to these

comments and because the case studies alone for the existing eleven Councils take over a day and a half to present, we have decided to replace the case studies with a half day panel discussion. We will seek your thoughts on what the panel discussion should focus on and ask appropriate sites/Councils to prepare short presentations that lead to broad discussion among all meeting participants.

3. **Review and discuss ways to further engage national level constituents.** Capitalizing on your local expertise and wisdom, I would like your thoughts and input on how to further engage the NMSP's national level constituents, including the possible establishment of a national advisory council. I would also specifically appreciate thoughts on how best to mesh our current councils with any new body that might be created. To assist with that discussion, I am enclosing a discussion memo drafted by an internal working group composed of headquarters and field staff. This will allow your council over a year to review and discuss the issue and provide your individual thoughts to me during a session at the 2006 Annual Meeting.
4. **Increase council representation at the annual meeting.** As our FY06 budget allows, the NMSP will invite two members of each council to the 2006 Annual Meeting -- the council chair and one other member selected by the council. I believe increased representation and the ensuing larger body will allow for more continuity from year-to-year and will also provide an enhanced forum for critical upcoming conversations on a national advisory body and other issues.

You will receive a package from me in August inviting your council members to the meeting and requesting input on the draft agenda and ideas for panel discussion. I look forward to your continued input into the process and thank you for your passion and dedication to protecting our precious sanctuary resources.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Basta
Director, National Marine Sanctuary Program

Enclosures